

Sports Media & Society



MMC 3703: Section 1A32
MMC 6936: Section 8904 (Graduate)

Times & Location

Weimer Hall 1064
Tuesday Period 3
Thursday Period 3-4

Instructor: Ted Spiker

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G-Chat/Skype: ProfSpiker (appointment)

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Office Hours: R 2-4 p.m.
(best by appointment)

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Office: Lobby of 2070 Weimer

Office hours: R 12-1 p.m.
or by appointment

Required Reading

Links to the readings will be posted on Canvas.

Prerequisites

None

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The Course

In this survey course, we will cover the relationships between the sports industry, athletes, media, and audience. We will discuss the evolution of sports media from the early sportswriters to the day when athletes control their own messages via Twitter. We will cover the various mediums—newspapers, magazines, books, radio, TV, online, forums, blogs, and social media—in terms of their history, function, impact, and ethical implications. This course is about developing literacy and critical-thinking skills about the sports industry and its relationship with the media. The course will consist of lectures, discussion, and guest speakers (live and via Skype). Please use professional courtesy when instructor, fellow students, and guests are talking.



Tweets of the Week

You are not required to have a Twitter account, but you are encouraged to be familiar with the social-media platform, because many current sports-media issues are played out on Twitter. The instructor will use Twitter and Snapchat to extend discussion, post relevant links, or give exam hints. Every week, posts will be eligible to win Tweet/Snap of the Week for extra-credit points. On Twitter, use #SportsMediaUF. On Snapchat, save your post and if I ask for it, send me the photo or video in an email. There's no limit to how many times you can win. #boom

Discussions

The course site on Canvas will serve as the central hub for course-related material. Here, you will find links to grades, syllabus, discussions, assignment, and readings. Because we will not be able to cover all issues during class, you are encouraged to continue discussions on the blog. You are required to make 5 insightful comments in the discussion section during the course of the semester (see more below).



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The Grading

You will have the opportunity to accumulate 1,000 points for the semester.*

- 200:** Exam 1
- 200:** Exam 2
- 200:** Exam 3
- 150:** Discussion Comments (5)
- 150:** Reading Quizzes (4 quizzes @ 50 points, drop the lowest)
- 100:** Social Media Assignment

*Grad students see file on Canvas

Exams: Includes only material from lectures and guests. Scantron multiple-choice.

Quizzes: From required reading only (links on Canvas). Most will be short-answer.

Discussion Comments: You must make 5 discussion comments on the Canvas site (3 before Oct. 17 at 11:59 p.m. and 2 after that but before Dec. 6 at 11:59 p.m.).

Social Media Assignment: See details on Canvas.

Grad Students: See details on Canvas.

Late assignments, discussion comments, etc... will not be accepted. Makeup exams and quizzes will only be given with documented medical excuse.

The Dates

EXAMS

Sept. 26
Oct. 24
Dec. 5

QUIZZES

Sept. 14
Oct. 12
Nov. 9
Nov. 30

SOCIAL MEDIA

Due Nov. 16 in class

DISCUSSION COMMENTS

>>3 before Oct. 17 at 11:59 p.m.,
>>2 after that and before Dec. 6 at 11:59 p.m.

IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

Sept. 14:	Quiz 1
Sept. 26:	EXAM 1
Oct. 12:	Quiz 2
Oct. 17:	Have 3 discussion comments by 5 p.m.
Oct. 24:	EXAM 2
Nov. 9:	Quiz 3
Nov. 16:	Social media assignment due in class
Nov. 30:	Quiz 4
Dec. 5:	EXAM 3
Dec. 6:	Have 2 discussion comments by 5 p.m.

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The Required Reading

Links will be posted on Canvas.

For Quiz 1

- >>“The Worldwide Leader in Dong Shots,” GQ, Gabriel Sherman, February 2011
- >>“How ESPN Ditched Journalism,” Deadspin, November 11, 2012

For Quiz 2

- >>“Sexual harrasment toward female reporters,” Richard Deitsch, Sports Illustrated, 2015
- >>“Twitter is Abusive and Declining, But Still Dominates the Sports Media,” The Big Lead, April 2016

For Quiz 3

Pick one:

- >>“Ali and His Entourage,” Sports Illustrated, Gary Smith, Nov. 15, 1989

OR

- >>“Damned Yankee,” Sports Illustrated, Gary Smith, Oct. 13, 1997

For Quiz 4

- >>“Bill Simmons Breaks Free,” Hollywood Reporter, June 2016
- >>“Michelle Beadle: ESPN’s Female Rebel, Raw and Uncensored,” Daily Beast, June 2015

The Grading Breakdown

925–1000	A	725–774	C
900–924	A-	700–724	C-
875–899	B+	675–699	D+
825–874	B	625–674	D
800–824	B-	600–624	D-
775–799	C+	0-599	E

Graduate students enrolled in the MMC section of this course should see the document on the Canvas site for adjustments to the grade distribution regarding graduate requirements.

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The Topics

Note: The order of topics covered in class is subject to change based on the availability of guest speakers, as well as current issues in the sports media (we adjust on the fly when something of relevance breaks). This will serve as a blueprint for the topics we'll cover, but not in this order.

BASICS: *Understanding how it works...*

Introduction: An Overview of the Sports Media & Basic Journalistic Principles
America's Best Sportswriters, Historical and Modern
Sports Radio: From Play-by-Play to Talk Radio
TV Coverage and the Power of ESPN
The Business of Sports Media
International Sports Media
Fictional Portrayals of Sportswriters

ISSUES: *Conflict in sports and media industries...*

Balanced Coverage: Who Gets It, Why, and Is It Right?
Portrayal of Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation in Sports
Women in Sports Media
Athletes in Control: The Social Media Effect

CASE STUDIES: *Specific instances to reflect on the bigger issues...*

Case Study: Media Coverage Colin Kaepernick
Case Study: Lavar Ball
Case Study: Media Coverage of Michael Sam
Case Study: The Decision and Portrayal of LeBron James
Case Study: Media Coverage of Tiger Woods
Case Study: How Sports Handled 9/11
Case Study: John Rucker's Mouth
Case Study: Bill Simmons
Case Study: Gary Smith, America's Best Sports Writer?
Case Study: Olympic Coverage
Case Study: The Penn State Saga
Case Study: The Cultural Importance of Sports Illustrated
Case Study: Falls from Grace (Manti Teo, Lance Armstrong, and more...)

More!

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The Fine Print

UF's Grading Policy

Please read: <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

Academic Integrity

The College of Journalism and Communications at UF is committed to upholding the University's Academic Honor code as detailed on UF's website. Academic dishonesty of any kind is not tolerated in this course. The university's guidelines provide additional details, which you are expected to understand completely. <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentrights.php#academichonestyguidelines>

Technology Devices (Phones & Computers)

We will incorporate technology in many of the class sessions, so you are encouraged to bring your laptop, smartphones or tablets to class. When using these devices, you are expected to be on task (no texting, Facebook, or changing fantasy lineups). As research on learning shows, unexpected noises and movement automatically divert and capture people's attention, which means you are affecting everyone's learning experience if your cellphone or laptop makes noise or is visually distracting during class. In short, turn your cellphone settings to silent/vibrate and use your laptop to take notes, not to watch YouTube videos (we'll do plenty of that in class).

Resources

The University of Florida is full of resources that can help you in your academic career. You are encouraged to make use of resources such as the library, tutoring, career resource center, etc. A list of useful UF resources can be found here: <http://www.ufadvising.ufl.edu/student-resources.aspx>

Students with Disabilities

Reasonable accommodations will be made for any students with disabilities. If you have a disability, the Dean of Students Office will give you official documentation, which you will give to your instructor. More information is on the Disability Resource Center page from the Dean of Students Office. <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

Counseling & Mental Health Center

UF's Counseling and Wellness Center (CWC) offers support for students in need. CWC is located at 3190 Radio Road and is open from 8-5 Monday through Friday. Please refer to the CWC's website for more information: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>



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The Instructor

Professor Ted Spiker is the chair of the department of journalism at UF. He was named the University of Florida Teacher of the Year for 2016-17. He came to UF in 2001 after being articles editor at Men's Health. A graduate of the University of Delaware and the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, Spiker has had work published in Outside, O the Oprah Magazine, Fortune, Women's Health, Runner's World, Reader's Digest, and many other magazines. He is also the author of the book DOWN SIZE and the co-author of nearly 20 books, including the YOU: The Owner's Manual series with Dr. Mehmet Oz and Dr. Mike Roizen. He is a Philadelphia sports fan, but has never once booed or thrown snowballs at Santa Claus. He developed and started teaching #SportsMediaUF in 2010.

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